Mermaids

A 5e Player Race by DM Tuz

Basic Edition

DM Tuz

Mermaids

"I want to be, where the people are.
I want to see them dancing!"

Mermaids, also known as merfolk, are aquatic humanoids who merge human and ichtyan features. In their home beneath the sea, mermaids have existed parallel to the other races of the world for centuries, free to establish their own civilization without outside influences.

For generations, mermaids have lived in harmony with the oceanic world and among one another. While not entirely spared from hardships in their long history, compared to the wartorn histories of the surface, the mermaid's existence has been notably peaceful and prosperous. Though tensions and rivalries exist, they are commonly resolved through diplomacy and wit, instead with brawn and blade. This history reflects on the mermaids as a whole, who have developed to become harmonious and peaceful people, but perhaps in the eyes of the surface dwellers, naive and sheltered might be a more appropriate lable.

Until the world of the mermaids and those of the surface dwellers met, mermaids have featured in plenty of tales told by sailors who had brief and half-remembered encounters with their kind. Therefore, the idea of mermaids permeated the surface culture long before their arrival, leading many mermaids to face preconceived notions about them and their kind birthed from the fantastical stories told about them. Perhaps confusing to mermaids exposed to them, but certainly not to their displeasure, as mermaids are genuine lovers of tall tales.

Mermaids are romantics through and through, typically believing in grand ideals and principles that may manifest in their often embellished view of reality. This romantic streak can manifest in many ways, but is a trait all mermaids share, may it be the fulfillment of a lifelong goal, the adventure of a lifetime, or becoming a person of great importance that leaves a mark in history. But they are not self-focused in their pursuits, as they are susceptible to others' passions, just as they seek to inspire others as well.

Siren
Artwork by Lobsteritus

Part of their World

One of the greatest tales told among the mermaids is the history of how their people were gifted the ability to walk the lands.

It is a story about a mermaid yearning for love but unable to find it, searching across the sea far and wide. But then a song lured her to the surface - a melody yearning for love - a melody that deeply resonated with the lone mermaid. When she breached the surface, she saw a lone human at the shore singing the tune. The lonely human captured her heart, and she experienced love she never thought she could. Despite not sharing a language, she responded with a tune of her own. Their song transcended words, and the human fell in love with the mermaid. They would continue to meet and sing once more, again, and again, and again.

The mermaid, though, grew discontent. The human was a creature of the land, and she was a creature of the sea. They lived in different worlds, yet she ached for the human's embrace. Upon their next meeting, she rode the grandest wave to carry her and was flushed to the shore, right into the arms of her beloved human. In that embrace, the mermaid refused to return to the sea; even as she grew weaker, she would not part with her love. In the end, she withered away and turned to seafoam, right in her lover's arms.

When the sea reclaimed her remains, her tears of love and joy mixed with the ocean's salty waters, blessing all of her kin to walk the land so that they too could find their hearts desire, whether it be on the land or in the sea.

Selaky
Artwork by Lobsteritus

Mermaid Traits

As a Mermaid, you possess innate traits and capabilities.

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score by 2 and increase a different one by 1, or increase three different ability scores by 1.

Creature Type. Your creature type is humanoid and shapeshifter.

Size. Your size is Medium.

Speed. You have a swim speed of 30 ft. and a walking speed equal to half your swim speed.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common, and another language of your choice.

Aquatic. You can breathe air and water, and your default movement is swimming, meaning that any effect, trait, or spell that increases your movement speed increases your swim speed instead. Additionally, you must be submerged in water or be similarly moisturized at least once every 24 hours, or gain one level of exhaustion. Exhaustion levels gained this way can't be reduced by long rests, unless you were moisturized within the last 24 hours.

Land Legs. As an action, you can magically transform your lower body into humanoid legs until you use another action to transform them back. When you change into your land legs, you gain a walking speed equal to your swimming speed. When you die, or when you are submerged in water, you transform back into your true form.

Subraces. Choose one of the following subraces: Siren, Selaky, and Kraken.

Siren

It is said that the Siren were born of the union between sea and song and assumed by early humans to be ghostly voices carried to the shores by wind and wave. Many folk lost their life at sea, vainly searching for the source of these captivating voices.

Siren, however, are a common type of mermaid who live in grand underwater societies from which their choirs rise to the surface above. They thrive on the ocean's harmony and rhythm, which they carry within their voice, giving its lovely sound a mesmerizing power.

Siren Voice. You learn the *Friends* cantrip and can cast it using only vocal components. Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell. Additionally, you can use an action to perform a Siren's Song. When you do so, you can target an amount of creatures equal to your proficiency modifier within 60 ft. of yourself that can hear you. The target creatures must succeed a Wisdom saving throw or be charmed for one minute or until the creature takes any amount of damage. A charmed creature has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks (and thus suffers a -5 penalty to its passive Perception). Once you perform a Siren's Song, you can't do so again until you finish a Short or Long Rest.

Aquan Tongue. Water dwelling beasts and monstrosities that can hear your voice can understand you as if you speak their language.

Thespian. You are proficient in Deception or Performance.

Check out these other Player Races!
Aside from the Dolls, I also have created plenty of other Monster Girl inspired player races, such as the Lamia and the Lacewing!

Selaky

The vicious Selaky commonly migrate the world's seas in search of adventure and riches. The Selaky had to grow courageous and fierce in order to confront the uncharted seas.

Their abbrasive demeanor has made them social misfits among the peaceful mermaids. Therefore the selaky generaly keep to their own.

Bite. Your sharp teeth make your bite a powerful weapon for unarmed strikes. If you hit with it, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d6 + your Strength modifier. When you reach level 9 the damage dice of your bite becomes 1d8.

Blood Frenzy. You can use a bonus action to move up to half of your speed towards a creature that you see and, if you are in range, make a bite attack against it. If the target is missing hit points your attack roll has advantage. You can use this bonus action an amount of times equal to your proficiency modifier before you have to finish a Long Rest to use it again.

Bully. You are proficient in Athletics or Intimidation.

Kraken

In the abyssal depths dwell the Krakenkin, or commonly called Kraken. They are the descendands of the legendary beasts and their mermaid subjects, given form through the use of eldritch magic. Within their abyssal homes they guard ancient knowledge and enigmatic artifacts left behind by their creators, using innate the primordial magic of their progenitors to deter anyone who seek to steal them.

However, throughout the generations the faith in their mission has vaned in many of their kind, abandonning their post to explore the oceans and beyond for greater meaning. This makes Kraken a rare and curious sight among the mermaids.

Kraken Magic. You learn the *Shocking Grasp* cantrip and the *Witch Bolt* spell and can cast them both without material components. You can cast the Witch Bolt spell without expending a spell slot at a level equal to half of your proficiency modifier rounded up. When you do so you must finish a Long Rest before you can do so again.

When you choose this subrace, you choose Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma as your spellcasting ability for these spells.

Tentacles. You possess 8 tentacles which you can use to make unarmed strikes or deliver spells with the range of touch. Your tentacles have the reach property and if you hit with your tentacles you deal bludgeoning damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier. You can use your tentacles to attempt to grapple other creatures. If you grapple another creature with your tentacles, your tentacles can be attacked,(using your AC and resistances and immunities). On a hit you suffer the damage dealt, and any amount of damage higher than twice your level will cause you to release the creature.

Additionally you can use your tentacles to hold objects, but they can't perform complex tasks such as using tools, wielding weapons, or perform somatic spell components.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Studious. You are proficient in Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion.

Kraken
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